

I STRONGLY SUPPORT MEDIA DIVERSITY

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

I AM ALARMED AND OUTRAGED THAT THE FCC IS EVEN CONSIDERING SCRAPPING THE REMAINING RULES REGARDING MEDIA OWNERSHIP WITHIN MARKETS.

Chairman Powell has purportedly said that little if any public comment need be solicited because it can all be done via the Internet. However, the fact that the broadcast media - which have a major conflict of interest in the matter of market and media consolidation - have reported on the story only once since last Fall (at 4:30 a.m.) clearly illustrates the nature of the problem. If the media fail to inform the public about this or any issue, the public remain ignorant and powerless to comment. Catch-22.

THE PUBLIC OWNS THE AIRWAVES, not the government and not the for-profit corporations that lease them from the government. It is the government's responsibility to serve the public in this matter and therefore to solicit as much public input as possible, not the least or the most convenient. A single meeting in Richmond, VA is laughably inadequate. Board member Coppes is to be applauded for his integrity in bringing hearings to other cities and for helping to alert the public the danger we now face.

THE DISSEMINATION OF DIVERSE VOICES AND INFORMATION IS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM OF DEMOCRACY. Without it, we will be irrevocably weakened, cut off at the knees, just as HIV/AIDS kills by destroying the body's defense mechanisms.

I BESEECH THE FCC NOT TO CHANGE THE RULES. I WOULD RATHER SEE A HALT ON FURTHER CONSOLIDATION AS CURRENTLY ALLOWED UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996.

YOURS SINCERELY

Peter van der Ven, DMD